

Bugliosi's 'Final Verdict' delayed

By KEITH J. KELLY

How long is too long to write a book?

So far "Helter Skelter" author Vincent Bugliosi has spent nine years writing his next book — and he's still going to miss the November publication date.

Bugliosi signed the original contract for "Final Verdict" — his long delayed tome on the assassination of John F. Kennedy — in May, 1989 with W. W. Norton.

The book will now be bumped to the spring of 1999.

"Vincent asked for more time with the manuscript and people felt that this was not a book that they wanted to rush into print," said Louise Brockett, a spokeswoman for Norton.

"It was in the fall ('98) catalog — so we must have thought in April that it was realistic for publication this year," said Brockett. But she said the delay was "nothing unusual."

"Vince decided to do one more rewrite," offered Peter

Miller Bugliosi's agent at P.M.A. Literary & Film Management.

The delay means that W.W. Norton is minus one of the big gun titles for its crucial Christmas selling season and will miss tie-ins to the 35th anniversary of the murder in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

"My gut reaction is that the delay will be somewhat hurtful, but he has a pretty impressive track record and I still think it will be a bestseller," said Glenn Sanislo, a co-publisher of Subtext, an industry newsletter.

Despite the delay, Simon & Schuster Audio has just agreed to pay an estimated \$50,000 for the audio rights to the book — which they plan to release simultaneously with the hardcover book.

One reason Norton is not too upset about the latest delay: since signing the original JFK book deal, Bugliosi's written two other bestsellers for the publisher. In 1996, he wrote "Outrage: The Five Reasons that O.J. Simpson

Got Away with Murder" and in 1991 he wrote "And the Sea Will Tell," an investigation into a 1974 murder mystery on a Pacific island.

He also took time off last year from the JFK book to pen a quickie 10,000 word book for the new paperback Random House imprint, the New Library of Contemporary Thought. In that, he blasted the Supreme Court for allowing the Paula Jones sexual harassment civil suit to proceed while Bill Clinton was still in office.

In the latest deal, both the audio and the book carry the tentative subtitle: "The Simple Truth on the Killing of John F. Kennedy."

The basic premise of the book is that there was no conspiracy and that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman. But in so doing, it rips many of the other conspiracy theories as well as reports such as the Warren Commission that support the lone gunman theory.

"This is going to be the definitive work on the killing of



VINCENT BUGLIOSI
Book on J.F.K.

Kennedy," insisted agent Miller.

Chris Lynch, editorial director of Simon & Schuster Audio bought the book after reading only the first 100 pages of the manuscript. "It has a good narrative quality to it," said Lynch.

Lynch acknowledged that the assassination topic has been "covered again and again — but I don't think the American people have had their fill of it yet."